

Dear Dog Lover,

Our monthly story at the end of this email: “He’s Friendly” submitted by one of our readers 😊

The online calendar has been updated for April and May. If you’re antsy doing some **fun stuff with your dog**, you can still join our **March classes:**

Nose Work Beginner Class (starts Mar 22) or the **Saturday Agility Classes** (start Mar 26).

April offers only a Puppy 1 Class. All dogs 6mo and older will then have to wait until May for more class opportunities, when we also offer **Tricks ‘N Click** again, since that class had to give way to another class this time around.

The next set of Behavior Classes starts May 18/19. If you’re right now in Puppy 1, you can already reserve your spot for Puppy 2. If you’re currently enrolled in the Puppy 2 or Foundation Class, make sure to reserve a spot in the Elementary School Class! Anybody else, **Tricks ‘N Clicks** might just be the right class for you! Want to turn your dog into a little household helper, cleaning up their toys, and maybe even your stuff? We teach you how to train your dog to show tricks like Roll-Over, jumping through a hoop, close the door, bring the remote, and open the fridge – oh wait, not the last one!!! 😊 Tricks ‘N Clicks is only offered twice a year.

Kennel Cough is on the move! This is the typical time for kennel cough to spread through the Valley. We had several cases within our clients, so our facility is no exception. Here’s some tips:

- All the cases happened to vaccinated dogs. So even if your dog is vaccinated, he/she can still get it, too. Usually in a milder abbreviated form, so it still helps to have them vaccinated.
- Symptoms are coughing, hacking, gagging, and maybe listlessness. One of those symptoms is enough to suspect kennel cough.
- If your dog shows symptoms, please keep them home. Your dog is welcome at our facility again after he/she has not shown symptoms for 3-5 days without being on medication
- If your Bordetella vaccine is already older than 6 months, we recommend a booster with a nasal vaccine. The nasal vaccine will give extra immunization within 24-48 hrs.

We also would like to welcome our newest daycare staff member, Jessie. Jessie has a very gentle way with the dogs without lacking leadership skills. Now you might talk to January, Kelly, Melissa or Jessie during our daycare times. All our girls are Certified Pet Care Technicians.

Our online schedule can look very confusing. Don’t hesitate to call us to help you decipher it! Especially the Tuesdays in March are quite loaded.

Like last time you'll find all changes from the March newsletter in **RED** below. Please, even if you're already signed up, check the schedule below to see if your class is affected.

Enjoy playing in the snow,
Claudia

Below you'll find:

- 1) Information on upcoming **events/ workshops**
- 2) **New classes** and workshops: Dates and times of upcoming classes
- 3) How to sign up for the classes
- 4) Information on the **Doggy Daycare** and Open Play Times
- 5) This month's story: **He's Friendly**

1) INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS:

Suzanne Clothier

Improving healthy relationships and humane training
Suzanne will on Friday evening look at the issues of power and leadership; on Saturday focus on the dog, its individuality, personalities, matches and mixups; and on Sunday talk about how to work with fearful, shy and reactive dogs.

March 18-20, at Alyeska Canine Trainers, Anchorage. For more information and a sign-up form, go to <http://www.alyeskak9trainers.com/events.htm#clothier>.

2) DATES AND TIMES OF UPCOMING CLASSES:

Drop-in classes running right now:

Instructors: Claudia, January

Weekly every Tuesday

Indoors or outside – please bring clothes accordingly. Punch card available online.

Nose Work (maximum 6 dogs – please call or email to reserve a spot):

- Beginners and Intermediate: **No drop-ins**. See below, now regular class
- Advanced: Tuesdays 6:30-7:30pm – **No practice on April 12, May 10, 17, 24; starting May 31 we'll probably move to 7:45pm**

Rally Practice:

- Tuesdays 7:45-9pm (please come on time for course set-up) – **last Rally Practice on April 5th** We might be able to schedule **some practices on Sundays**, especially before a trial is coming up.

Nose Work Beginners Class starting March 22nd:

Instructors: January, Claudia

The class will run for 6 weeks and end Apr 26th.

Nose Work Beginners: Tuesdays 5:15-6:15pm (starts WITH the dogs)

Agility classes starting Mar 26th:

Instructors: Claudia, Kat

The classes will run for 6 weeks, with a break on April 30th (for an agility trial held in the Valley) and end May 7th.

We might add a second beginners class, which will then shift the times around a little.

We'll try to keep them within 1/2hr of the times posted below.

Agility Puppy/Beginners: Saturday 10am-12pm (class 10:30-11:30am)

Agility Skills Training: Saturday 11:30am-1pm (class 12-1pm)

Lunch break: 1-2pm

Agility Sequencing: Saturday 2-4pm (class 2:30-3:30pm)

Agility Trialing 1: Saturday 3:30-5pm (class: 4-5pm)

Agility Trialing 2: Saturday 5-6:30pm (class:5-6pm)

Puppy class starting April 12th:

Instructors: January, Claudia

The class will run for seven weeks, and end May 24.

Puppy 1 – Preschool (first week: 6:30-8:30pm without the dogs): Tuesday 7:45-8:45pm

Nose Work Classes starting May 10th:

Instructors: January, Claudia

The class will run for 6 weeks and end June 14th.

Nose Work Intro to Odor: Tuesdays 5:15-6:15pm (starts WITH the dogs)

Nose Work Beginners: Tuesdays 6:30-7:30pm (starts WITH the dogs)

Behavior classes starting May 18th/19th:

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks, and end April 20/21.

Puppy 1 – Preschool (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs): Wednesday 5-6pm

overflow class: Wednesday 6:15-7:15

Foundation Class (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs): Wednesday 7:30-8:30pm

Tricks 'N Clicks College: Thursday 5-6pm

Puppy 2 - Kindergarten: Thursday 6:15-7:15pm

Elementary School: Thursdays 7:30-8:30

Upcoming classes:

This summer will be filled with Agility outdoors, Nose Work and more Flyball action besides our regular classes! The Flyball dates you find on the calendar right now are only tentative. Watch our schedule for upcoming classes and events.

3) HOW TO SIGN UP FOR THE CLASSES

It's easy!!! On our webpage www.bettercompanion.com, use the menu bar on the left. You'll find a button "Classes", with the subtitle "Registration", which brings you directly to the **one registration form for ALL classes and workshops**. After clicking "enroll" at the end, you'll get to the pricing and payment page, which explains all payment options, policies, and allows you to pay online, too. You can also check out the **pricing** page first, to learn about prices, payment and cancellation policies. Take advantage of our **pre-registration fee** by signing up a minimum of **14 days before the start of your class**. Please read our cancellation policy on the pricing page – you almost can't lose!

Puppy 1 Preschool clients, please remember you can also purchase the **Puppy School Packet**, including P1 and P2 class. You only have to commit to the seven weeks of P1 class, and will receive a voucher for P2, valid for 1 full year! For P2 voucher holders, the voucher will be your payment. After you fill out the registration form for P2, you can email us the voucher number, mail the voucher to us or drop it off at the facility.

Reserve your spot! Please note **our registration policy: Only the payment will hold your spot.** Spots are reserved in the order we receive payment for them. **Always sign up for the class you want to join**, even if it could be full. Only the payment will keep you on the waiting list, in case somebody else drops out before the class starts. **Your payment is never lost**, even if the class is already full. Your payment will 1) save you a spot at the class, or 2) save you a spot on the waiting list, or 3) can be carried over to a later class, or 4) can be refunded if I couldn't get you in the class you chose, or 5) can cause me to open an overflow class ☺. Just as a note: I sometimes get up to three dogs per class moved in from a waiting list before the class even starts. **We now can take credit card payments over the phone and at the facility.**

4) DOGGY DAYCARE AND OPEN PLAY TIMES:

Doggy Daycare: Our regular hours are now from 6am-7pm. That means NO SURCHARGE for drop-offs any time after 6am!

The fee for the monthly daycare is \$325. We need to know your dog before coming to daycare. Also appointments/ reservation are necessary. **We're getting full on some days now**, so please remember to

1) reserve your spot for daycare and

2) we might mark you off if you didn't show, if we had to turn away another dog that day.

Reminder: For all daycare participants the **worm status is only good for 6 months.**

We ask everybody to either deworm their dog or have a fecal sample checked every 6 months.

Open Play Time: Come with your dog for one hour of dog play and dog owner social time. Each dog must be supervised by an adult handler, one dog per handler only.

Vaccinated dogs only (5-way/DHPPi, dogs over 6 mo: Rabies, Bordetella). We also require having the dog dewormed or a fecal sample checked.

First-timers: bring your vaccination papers, we want to see them! Dogs over 6 months, please for the first time make an appointment with us to come on a Friday, when Claudia and Frank are managing the play times. After that, we'll discuss with you which hour will be best and if you can come Mondays as well.

Fee: \$7 at the door or punch card \$35 for 6 visits.

Our Open Play Times (indoors + outdoors) have become a safe playground for dogs of any size due to our size restrictions for each group. Only timid and absolutely non-reactive dogs can be slightly heavier than the group limit. The group from 7-8pm is limited to 8 dogs, and reservations can be made in advance. Just call us and we explain the details.

Every Monday AND Friday:

5-6pm: puppies, toy and small dogs up to 25#

6-7pm: puppies and medium adult dogs 30-50# (giant breed puppies can be heavier)

7-8pm: Large adult dogs over 60# (indoors: 8 dogs max; outdoors: 10 dogs max)

8-9pm: By appointment only – limited to one dog for evaluations. \$35

You can check the web page www.bettercompanion.com for info on classes, facility, and schedule, read testimonies from other students, print out the registration form...

Or contact us by email or phone (see below).

5) HE'S FRIENDLY

“Don’t Worry, He’s Friendly!” I used to say that with a confident smile when I was out with Ed our 10 year old German Shepherd Dog and Sony our lab/pit mix, 11, whenever we came across another romping, off-lead dog. And I don’t know how many times I’ve heard it from other happy-go-lucky dog parents since then. No one ever thinks “Gee, I could use more of a challenge; I think next time I’ll get a dog who DOESN’T get along well with other dogs,” but sometimes it happens that way, and so it has with my Lucas a 2 year old German Shepherd Dog.

I don’t really have any excuse. I bought Lucas as an 8-week old pup from a local breeder, took him through puppy and obedience classes at Better Companion in Wasilla and tried to get him out to dog-friendly places as much as possible to meet lots of people and other dogs. We attended open play times and daycare at Better Companion later on. Still, Lucas is a high-drive, wary individual who warms up to other dogs and people very slowly and whose first inclination on meeting something or someone new is to look and sound fierce. I wanted the high-drive part for competing in dog sports like agility, and we have also ended up getting into search and rescue (SAR) training as well. He excels at both. But his extreme wariness of new people, dogs, and sometimes things remains. The very thing he needs, repeated positive experiences with all these “scary” potential threats is difficult to set up. Through the willingness of our agility and SAR friends to work with us, Lucas has come a long way. I have high hopes that we can one day earn his Canine Good Citizen title, but he’ll probably never be a dog I can turn loose at the dog park.

Which brings me back to my original thought. There are quite a few dogs out there with a variety of issues, for a variety of reasons that make them unsuited for complete freedom around other dogs and people. Before Lucas whenever I saw a dog exhibiting anti-social behavior I always thought “bad owner, didn’t properly socialize”, but now I’m more aware that there can be any number of causes behind that sort of behavior. The dog could be a rescued dog that has not had much training or, as in my case with Lucas, an attitude he has had since birth. I think I can pretty confidently say that when we, as owners of less-social dogs bring our dogs out in public, we aren’t looking for trouble. We don’t want our dog to growl at your dog or you. We just want to get out and about with our dog and maybe even work on improving their behavior. It’s definitely our responsibility to be careful *where* we take them, especially if we want to give them an off-lead romp. It’s our responsibility to make sure everyone is safe and we can control our dog.

Even normally friendly dogs can react to a new canine introduction with hesitation or fear. To be good canine owner citizens we have to be aware of our dogs’ intentions by watching body language. So when you and your friendly dog find yourselves on a stretch of remote mountain trail, an open fetch field, or even your own front yard and a strange dog appears, consider making sure that all the dogs are under control first, *then* say “he’s friendly, can they play?” And if the answer is “no,” be content that you’ve

helped a fellow dog-person avoid a potential conflict. If you have a few spare minutes you might even ask, "Is there anything I can help you work on?" Then allow the owner to do what they need to do to work with their dog. I know the offer would mean a great deal to me!

Submitted by Stacey, owner of Lucas, the German Shepherd Dog. Thanks Stacey!

If you'd like to submit a story for our monthly newsletter, contact us!

Happy training,
Claudia
Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KA
(Certified Professional Dog Trainer)

Your BetCo Team at
The Better Companion - Regine Dog Training Facility
Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KA
Frank Sihler, Iditarod Finisher
Kelly Saunders (office)

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